

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ZACCAGNINI STEAMROLLS DC LOMBARDY CONGRESS

SUMMARY

1. LOMBARDY'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN A LIVELY, WIDE OPEN, TWO-DAY CONGRESS GAVE CENTER AND LEFT WING BACKERS OF DC NATIONAL SECRETARY BENIGNO ZACCAGNINI A CRUSHING SUCCESS. IN A TENSE MARATHON DEBATE, THE OVERWHELMING DEMAND OF DELEGATES AND SPEAKERS OF ALL FACTIONS WAS FOR A DRASTIC PURGE OF THE DC NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, THE CLEAN UP OF THE PARTY AND, LESS ENTHUSIASTICALLY, A GOVERNING ALLIANCE WITH THE SOCIALISTS.

2. WHILE THE LOMBARDY DC MEETING WAS SUNDAY SCHOOL' PICNIC COMPARED TO A US PARTY CONGRESS AND HAD AS MANY FACTIONS AS THERE ARE CANDIDATES IN OUR DEMOCRATIC PARTY PRIMARIES, IT WAS A MORE ROUGH AND TUMBLE PROCESS THAN THE COMPARABLE LOMBARDY SOCIALIST CONGRESS ON (MILAN) 23-25, 1976.

3. THE CENTRAL TASK WAS TO CHOOSE DELEGATES TO THE DC NATIONAL CONGRESS IN ROME ON MARCH 18 AT WHICH A NATIONAL COUNCIL WILL BE SELECTED TO ELECT THE DC
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NATIONAL SECRETARY. THE TWO MAIN CONTENDERS IN

LOMBARDY WERE BENIGNO ZACCAGNINI AND ARNALDO FORLANI. WITH ABOUT ONE FIFTH OF THE TOTAL DC NATIONAL COUNCIL COMING FROM LOMBARDY, THE DECISIONS OF THE LOMBARDY REGION ARE THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT IN ITALY, AND THAT IS ONE REASON THAT THE ZACCAGNINI FORCES WANTED THE LOMBARDY CONGRESS TO TAKE PLACE AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE SO AS TO INFLUENCE THE DECISION TAKEN IN OTHER REGIONS - ESPECIALLY PIEDMONT - LATER.

4. IN THE FINAL VOTE, THE ZACCAGNINI TICKET BY ITSELF CARRIED 66.81 PERCENT OF THE DELEGATES. BUT IN ADDITION, THE SEPARATE COMUNIONE AND LIBERAZIONE TICKET, WHICH IS FORMALLY PLEDGED TO ZACCAGNINI, WON ANOTHER 7.1 PERCENT. MOREOVER, SEVERAL LOCAL TICKETS (BERGAMO, 0.6 PERCENT; BRESCIA, 4.1 PERCENT; AND PAVIA, 1.6 PERCENT,) WHICH REFUSED TO MERGE WITH EITHER THE ZACCAGNINI OR THE FORLANI TICKET, ALTHOUGH LARGELY RIGHT OF CENTER, WILL PROBABLY GIVE SOME SUPPORT TO ZACCAGNINI AS WELL.

5. THE OPENLY FORLANI FORCES WERE LED BY THE REMNANTS OF THE FANFANI AND DOROTEI FACTIONS ON TWO TICKETS WHICH TOGETHER WON ONLY 1/4 PERCENT OF THE DELEGATES.

6. WHILE DELEGATION MEMBERS ARE NOT BOUND TO VOTE AT THE NATIONAL CONGRESS FOR THE CANDIDATES TO WHOM THEY ARE PLEDGED AT THE REGIONAL CONGRESS, LOCAL DC LEADERS DO NOT EXPECT SIGNIFICANT DEFECTIONS OF SUPPORT FOR ZACCAGNINI. HOWEVER, THE WIDE OPEN QUESTION FOR THEM IS THE TYPE OF LEADERSHIP THAT WILL BE ELECTED TO SURROUND HIM. LEFT WING LOMBARDY DC MILITANTS FEAR THAT MORE CONSERVATIVE DC DELEGATES WHO HAVE BEEN ELECTED ON THE ZACCAGNINI TICKET WILL, TO BE SURE, ELECT HIM BUT THEN MAKE HIM A PRISONER OF THE OLD GUARD. THIS IS ONE REASON THAT THE COMUNIONE AND LIBERAZIONE GROUP SAID THAT IT INSISTED UPON RUNNING AS A SEPARATE TICKET - SO THAT IT WOULD BE FREE TO BACK ZACCAGNINI SUPPORTERS IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL. ANOTHER REASON, OF COURSE, IS THAT COMUNIONE AND LIBERAZIONE IS A RISING NEW FACTION WHICH WANTS TO WHEEL AND DEAL ON ITS OWN - A FACTOR THAT HAS MADE THE REST OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE LOMBARD DDC LEADERSHIP LESS THAN HAPPY.

7. THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT, IN ANY EVENT, WAS THE SPLIT OF THE PREVIOUSLY DOMINANT LOMBARDY RIGHT (THE DOROTEO FACTION)) WITH A SIGNIFICANT PART OF IT AT LEAST TEMPORARILY ALIGNED WITH THE DC CENTER - LEFT. THE SHIFT OF A LARGE PART OF THE POWERFUL DC SMALL FARMERS UNION (COLTIVATORI DIRETTI) TO BACK ZACCAGNINI IS AN IMPORTANT

EVENT THAT REINFORCES THE POWER OF LEFT WING DC MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE GIOVANI MARCORA, THE MOST POWERFUL DC LEADER IN THE REGION.

8. WHILE A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS HAS AS MUCH TROUBLE DEFINING CHRISTIAN AS A SOCIALIST CONGRESS HAS INTERPRETING MARX, THE OBSERVER AT BOTH LOMBARDY CONGRESSES COME AWAY WITH SEVERAL IMPRESSIONS. FIRST, THE SOCIALISTS LEADERS ARE PRIVATELY FAVORABLE TO ALLIANCE WITH THE DC BUT PUBLICLY ARE NOT WHILE ALL FACTIONS OF THE DC WANT SUCH AN ALLIANCE BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY DESPITE MUCH PAIN WITH THE SOCIALISTS. OF COURSE, THE SOCIALISTS HAVE A THEORETICAL CHOICE OF ALLIANCE WITH COMMUNISTS OR THE DC WHILE DC LEADERS FEEL THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT THE SOCIALISTS. SECOND, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND SOCIALISTS LARGELY AGREE ON THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE FORMER. NO DC SPEAKER ROSE WHO DID NOT CASTIGATE THE PARTY LEADERSHIP FOR GRAFT, BRIBERY, LACK OF PERFORMANCE, LOSING CONTACT WITH THE GRASS ROOTS AND ARROGANCE. THE LOCKHEED, OIL COMPANY AND CIA SCANDALS WERE AN INESCAPABLE BACKDROP FOR THE DC CONGRESS. THIRD, SOCIALIST FACTIONAL DIFFERENCES

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WERE FAIRLY WELL SUBMERGED AND THERE WAS A MINIMUM OF PUBLIC HAIR PUTTING. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC DIF-

FERENCES WERE WIDE OPEN AND DISPLAYED IN SHOUTING FROM THE FLOOR, HOOTING AND WHISTLING TO THE POINT THAT ONLY TWO OR THREE PRO-FORLANI SPOKESMEN TOOK THE FLOOR TO FACE THE OVERWHELMINGLY PRO-ZACCAGNINI DELEGATES AND GALLERY. FOURTH, WHILE SOCIALISTS ROARED THEIR APPROVAL OF ABORTION AT ANY MENTION OF IT, THE WORD WAS USED ONLY ONCE DURING THE DC CONGRESS AND WAS STUDIOUSLY IGNORED BY THE AUDIENCE. FNALLY, THE SOCIALISTS CONCENTRATED THEIR ATTENTION AND HOSTILITY ON THE COMMUNISTS AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, ON THE CONTRARY, DEVOTED VIRTUALLY ALL OF THEIR PASSION TO THEIR OWN PARTY AND ITS SHORTCOMINGS.

9. ONE MUST CONCLUDE THAT THE LOMBARDY DC REGIONAL CONGRESS WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE ALMOST UNIVERSAL REVOLT AGAINST THE DC NATIONAL LEADERSHIP THAT WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL BEGINNING WITH THE DIVORCE REFERENDUM (MAY, 1974) AND BECOMING MOST OUT-SPOKEN SINCE THE DC DEFEAT ON JUNE 15, 1975. THE LEADERS OF ALL THE FACTIONS HAVE TOLD US PRIVATELY BEFOE, AS THEY DID DURING THE CONGRESS, THAT BOTH THOSE SUPPORTING ZACCAGNINI AND THOSE BACKING FORLANI AGREE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT THE OLD GUARD MUST GO AND THAT THE PARTY MUST BE CLEARED UP. THIS WILL PROBABLY NOT MEAN THAT ALL THE OLD FACES WILL LOSE THEIR JOBS ALTHOUGH SOME LIKE ANTONIO GAVA ARE EXPECTED TO GO. BUT, THE POWER OF THE ANDREOTTI'S, FANFANI'S, BONOMI'S, COLOMBO'S, MORO'S, RUMOR'S AND THEIR GENERATION WILL PROBABLY BE SHORN AND THE GENERATION OF THE BISAGLIAS AND THE MARCORAS WILL EMERGE AS THE NEW CENTER OF POWER, ACCORDING TO LOMBARDY LEADARS.

10. THE NATURE OF THE PARTY REFORMS DESIRED WAS NAILED DOWN IN A RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY BASSETTI AND ACCEPTED ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY. AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT CALLS FOR (1) PARTY REPRESENTATION TO BE BASED ON VOTES POLLED RATHER LHAN CARD CARRYING MEMBERSHIP (WHICH CAN BE BOUGHT); (2) A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF TERMS A MEMBER MAY SERVE IN PARLIAMENT; (3) A FORMULA TO SHARE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PARTY SUBSIDIES IN THIRDS WITH THE REGION AND PROVINCIAL PARTY ORGANIZALION; (4) BARRING OF THE HOLDING OF BOTH PARTY AND GOVERNMENT POSTS AND (5) A COMPLETE REWRITING OF THE PARTY CONSTITUTION TO OPEN THE PARTY TO A WIDER SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

11. IF THE LOMBARDY DC HAS ITS WAY IN ROME, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY MAY BE HEADED FOR THE NEW LEASE ON LIFE CALLED FOR BY SO MANY HERE WHO ARE ASKING FOR THE THIRD DC - (AFTER THE PARTITO POPOLARE OF DON STURZO

AND THE POST-WAR DC OF DE GASPERI). BUT ANY OPTIMISM
MUST BE TEMPERED BY FINDINGS OF SEVERAL RECENT
CONFIDENTIAL DC PUBLIC OPINION POLLS WHICH SHOWED THAT
HAD NEW ELECTIONS BEEN HELD IN DECEMBER, THE DC AND
PCI WOULD RUN NECK-IN-NECK WITH 35 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. DC
ELECTION EXPERTS PREDICT THAT EXTRAPOLATING EXISTING
POLLING DATA, THE DC WOULD DECLINE TO UNDER 30 PERCENT AND
THE PCI REACH ALMOST 40 PERCENT BY THE SCHEDULED PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS OF 1977.

12. THE NEXT MAJOR DC POLITICAL EVENT IN LOMBARDY WILL
BE THE PARTY CONGRESS AT THE END OF MARCH TO SELECT THE
NEW LOCAL LEADERSHIP.FINA

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